

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE**

**July 10, 2008  
1:30 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met in Hearing Room 1 of the Senate Building, 1700 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. MST.

## **1. Call to Order**

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman

Mr. Jim DiCello

Dr. Eugene Garcia

Ms. Margaret Dugan

Ms. Johanna Haver

Ms. Eileen Klein

Absent:

Dr. John Baracy

Ms. Karen Merritt

Ms. Anna Rosas

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

## **2. Approval of June 12, 2008 minutes of Task Force meeting**

Mr. Alan Maguire moved this item to the August meeting to allow Task Force members time to review the minutes.

## **3. Review, discussion and possible action of proposed Alternate Models**

Mr. Alan Maguire stated that two districts with alternate proposed models are scheduled to present their edited models to the Task Force. The first district to present was Peoria Unified School District (Peoria USD), represented by K-12 Administrator Mr. Eric Gundrum and Ms. Stacie Hacker, Director of English Acquisitions Service. Peoria USD submitted its first proposed alternate model to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), Office of English Acquisition Services (OELAS), approximately one month ago. Since the original submittal, the district decided to resubmit, after examining ADE's alternate models' criteria and making changes to align the district's proposed model closer to the criteria rubric.

Mr. Gundrum described the four features of the Peoria USD alternate model. The first feature of the model is to serve all ELLs as identified by the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) with four hours of English Language Development (ELD), except those who have shown proficiency on another formative assessment such as AIMS or DIBELS and are in the top quarter of the Intermediate level on AZELLA. The second feature is, in most cases, a “Two plus Two” model, which gives students more access to content as well as language development than the use of the Individualized Language Learner Plan (ILLP). Mr. Gundrum stated that many of Peoria’s ELL students would be eligible to use the ILLP option due to the district’s low number of ELLs. However, with the alternative model, the district hopes to provide better education by providing two hours of ELD instruction by a highly qualified language specialist with either an English as a Second Language (ESL) or Bilingual endorsement, and two hours of homeroom instruction where ELLs are grouped by proficiency in clusters within a homeroom classroom and taught language through content using Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The third feature is that the district is willing to segregate (?) kindergarten-aged ELL students into separate classrooms. This was a point of discussion in the earlier version. He said that ELLs would also have a documented ILLP to monitor their progress. The fourth feature is, in high school, ELL students would have three hours of ELD, and during the fourth hour students would use an ILLP in a content area class with an English highly qualified teacher or with a teaching assistant in the class to assist with their language acquisition.

Ms. Eileen Klein asked if all students have ILLPs. Mr. Gundrum verified that all ELL students have ILLPs in order to monitor their progress and document the services they receive. The ILLPs are useful for their content area classes. Dr. Eugene Garcia asked how this model deviates from the law. Mr. Gundrum stated that the only deviation is the decision not to provide four hours of ELD for ELL students who have shown proficiency in English through passing the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) or Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) while still testing as Intermediate on the AZELLA. He stated that these students do not need four hours of ELD, and the district believes parents would opt out of the program for these students anyway. Ms. Klein asked if the district could logistically provide what the law stipulates, but prefers not, to simply because the district does not consider it necessary to teach these near-proficient ELLs the full four hours of ELD. Mr. Gundrum agreed. He stated that if students are Intermediate on AZELLA but passing AIMS and successfully performing in a mainstream class, they do not need four hours of ELD.

Mr. Maguire asked if the district had looked at the rule of exemptions in the Task Force model where ELLs passing a portion of the AZELLA may opt out of that particular ELD class. Ms. Hacker replied that this did not exempt all ELLs who were passing AIMS. She asked for flexibility beyond using the AZELLA as an assessment of proficiency. Mr. Maguire asked how the district could reconcile the law stating that a student must be proficient on the AZELLA in order to leave the ELL program. Dr. Garcia stated that the AZELLA may fail to assess all areas. He asked the Task Force which was better, the AZELLA or the state AIMS test. He stated it is possible there are psychometric issues with the AZELLA. This assessment is more likely to have these issues than the AIMS. He further stated that things have been complicated by the

inclusion of the AZELLA and that if an ELL student is doing well in his or her content classes, the student should not be held back in an ELL program. Dr. Garcia said that the ELL program was designed so that students could succeed in mainstream content area classes. Ms. Johanna Haver asked what proportion of students fit into this category. Ms. Hacker stated that out of approximately 2200 ELLs, a hundred students meet this criterion. Having the flexibility for them to opt out of some ELD allows them to remain on track for graduation.

Ms. Klein asked how the district determined to target the top quarter of the Intermediate level on AZELLA, as opposed to the top eighth or top half. Mr. Gundrum stated that this specific group was arbitrarily selected, but that the district is willing to serve individual needs. If a student is struggling in mainstream classes, he or she would be moved back into the ELL program. Mr. Maguire questioned the district regarding their ELD classes. Ms. Hacker stated that there would be two hours of ELD in an ELL-only classroom, and two hours of ELD taught through content using SIOP in a mainstream classroom where students are clustered within the classroom. Mr. Maguire stated that his understanding of SIOP was that it aided in the comprehension of content, but was not a method to teach English language development.

Ms. Margaret Dugan asked why the district was not considering grouping ELLs of similar proficiency across grades if the numbers are low. She stated that it seemed to her that it would be easier for teachers to teach similar proficiencies. Mr. Gundrum stated that parents would opt out of the ELL program, if their junior or senior student had to take three blocks of ELD and had to hold off graduation. Ms. Dugan asked if the Glendale model would work for this district. Ms. Hacker stated she had not seen the Glendale model.

Mr. Maguire stated that the use of a combination of the Glendale and the Phoenix UHSD models could work for Peoria. Things might be a little more complicated at the K-8 level. He could not approve a model using only SIOP for two hours of content area classes to count as ELD. Dr. Garcia encouraged Mr. Maguire to reconsider his decision. Dr. Garcia said that to him, the issue is more about how well ELL students are doing in content-area classes than their scores on the AZELLA. If a student is doing well in school, the Task Force should consider allowing more content area classes and less ELD. Ms. Dugan reminded everyone that schools and districts can test students mid-year to see if ELL students classified in the fall can reclassify as proficient mid-year. She encouraged this practice particularly for Intermediate level ELLs. Ms. Haver commented that perhaps there was some motivation for students not to pass AZELLA. Mr. Maguire stated that he had run a comparison of those passing AIMS and not AZELLA, but that this study had been universal for the state of Arizona. He asked Mr. Gundrum if there was a similar study for Peoria USD. Ms. Hacker stated that Peoria would consider the Task Force recommendations and would resubmit their proposed alternate model.

The second district to present was Window Rock Unified School District (WRUSD). Ms. Susan Stucker-ELL Coordinator, Ms. Jennifer Wheeler-Dine' Language and Culture Coordinator, Ms. Roberta Taya,-Principal of the Tse Ho Tso Middle School, Sandra Poolaw-Federal Programs Director, and Ms. Loretta Tsosie-Dean of Instruction at Tsehootsooi Elementary School, presented on behalf of WRUSD. Ms. Stucker presented a packet of materials for the Task Force

members to read. **See Attachment A.** Ms. Wheeler introduced the proposed alternate model, stating that the ELL students in WRUSD are primarily Navajo who speak English and perform all work in English, but because someone in their household speaks a language other than English, they are classified as ELL and may not be able to pass the AZELLA when tested. Prior to the law, these students were completing their class work in the same classrooms as their proficient peers. Ms. Wheeler read from the statute about how models should take into account the location and size of the district as well as other factors. She stated that the WRUSD model is the Task Force's model with some modifications to meet the needs of Native Americans. Ms. Wheeler said that the district wishes to have their Basic and Intermediate ELL students take two hours of ELD based on their sub-test scores and have students placed in their homeroom classes the remaining two hours. During the two, homeroom hours, students would receive help from an interdisciplinary team. WRUSD believes that the segregation of their ELL students is harmful to their self-esteem. The district asked the Task Force for the opportunity to pilot test this model for one year to demonstrate its effectiveness.

Ms. Tayah presented the middle school model. She stated that they have two teams of instructors to assist students. In sixth grade, for example, there are two teams, "6a" and "6b." For the ELL program, the "6a" team will provide instruction to the ELL students who will be placed in the program according to their AZELLA scores. They will have similar groups for 7th and 8th grades. In grades where there is not a sufficient number of ELLs to create a class, the school will include proficient students who have lower AIMS scores and who typically need the same kind of English instruction as the lower proficient ELL students. These students will have an additional hour of reading. This would be a total of 38 students at the middle school. Last year the middle school exited over 100 ELLs.

Ms. Stucker stated that 99% of their student population is Native American. The district piloted this type of grouping strategy in their elementary schools this year but had not implemented the ELD strategies yet. Now that the teachers have been trained by ADE on the DSI, they are ready to implement the strategies this school year. There are only Basic and Intermediate level ELL students, and all ELL students are orally proficient in English.

Ms. Klein asked for the total number of students in the district. Ms. Stucker said that there are approximately 2600 students in the district. Mr. Maguire noted that one elementary school was intending to use the ILLP option, while the others would mix proficient and non-proficient students. Ms. Stucker stated that they prefer to do this, as they don't quite have low enough numbers for the ILLP option. She said that they may have twenty-two or twenty-six ELLs instead of twenty for a three grade span. Rather than teaching several grades in the same classroom, they prefer to keep the students in their same grade.

The process of denoting a student as ELL is arbitrary in their region because it depends who fills out the form. One parent may mark them as a Primary Home Language Other Than English (PHLOTE) while another parent filling out the form at a different time might not. Mobility is also an issue. If students were asked what their primary language was, most would say English. In other more rural areas one might hear Navajo spoken, but in WRUSD, English is the primary

language for most students. There are lower numbers of ELLs in the lower grades, as parents have heard about ELL and are no longer marking their children as PHLOTEs. The pattern is typical to have oral proficiency with Basic or Intermediate reading and writing skills. Those who have low performance on tests such as AIMS have the same issues as those who are identified as ELLs in that they need intensive English instruction. The district thinks the ELL program will be helpful to force the district to focus on language and to help students in need of language development.

Ms. Dugan asked if the ILLP would be an option. Ms. Wheeler stated that it might work for a brand new ELL student, but not otherwise. Most ELL students pass at least one of their subtests, and the district will try to keep them together with others of similar proficiency. Mr. Maguire asked what the four hours comprised. Ms. Tayah stated that the first two hours would be language arts and reading, and then teachers in the content areas of math, science etc. will use SEI strategies to help teach ELL students, using the Written Individual Compensatory Instruction plan (WICP) to help monitor students. Again it was stressed that ELL students would be grouped together for all classes, except in the cases where there are not enough ELL students to form a class. In those cases, the school would select non-ELL identified students who are failing or falling far below on their AIMS and who have similar proficiency.

Mr. Maguire and Ms. Dugan asked for clarification on what is taught during the four hours of ELD. Ms. Tayah explained that there would be two hours of language arts plus an additional hour of reading for those not passing AIMS. This leaves three hours in the school day for social studies, math, and science. These content classes would include language objectives. Mr. Maguire commented that the additional hour of reading was not in the narrative and needs to be added. Mr. John Stollar from ADE stated that he would assist WRUSD in updating the narrative to include this addition. Mr. Maguire asked where grammar would fit into the ELD block. He commented that in many ways this model is similar to Glendale Union High School's model and other approved models. Ms. Stucker stated that the language arts block included grammar.

Dr. Garcia encouraged the Task Force to pursue this model, as it identifies a set of students whose primary language is English but because of other languages spoken in their home are being identified as PHLOTEs and are then required to take the AZELLA. He has had questions about whether native English speaking children would be able to pass the AZELLA and this highlights his concern.

Ms. Dugan stated that the State may need to look at the PHLOTE form; she was not aware who decided which questions to include in the form. If a student speaks only English, it doesn't matter that one person in their home speaks another language. That student should not be identified as a PHLOTE or an ELL student. ELLs are intended to be students learning English as a second language.

Mr. Maguire asked WRUSD to submit the model again with the narrative reworked with the assistance of ADE. Ms. Stocker agreed, adding that the district could submit a two-scenario

model, one scenario for ELL students who passes only the oral portion of the AZELLA, and a second scenario for ELL students who pass both the oral and writing portions. Mr. Maguire agreed to hold action on this pending clarification.

#### **4. Review and discussion of proposed Alternate Models that have been withdrawn**

Mr. Maguire noted a list of proposed alternate models submitted to ADE and the Task Force (**Attachment B**) which was color-coded to denote which models were resolved or unresolved. Models which have been withdrawn are typically those models where an alternative was selected that used one of the approved models. Mr. Stollar stated that ADE has been working closely with schools and districts to develop compromises between what districts or schools wanted, the requirements of the law, and the ELL models already approved by the Task Force. Mr. Stollar commented that he was very pleased with how districts have been working with ADE.

Dr. Garcia expressed that there will always be an obligation for the Task Force to consider alternate models as they are submitted. He asked what criteria ADE is using and how these criteria can be communicated to the school districts in order to streamline the process. He was aware of the rubric and the spreadsheet that ADE created, but asked that there be clear definitions of the items so that schools and districts will know if their models meet the requirements as set by the Task Force. Dr. Garcia stated he was aware these criteria might change as alternate models are adopted. He asked that ADE staff create a clear set of criteria for school districts to meet in order to have the best chance of having their models approved. Mr. Stollar agreed that this was a good idea and that this issue had been discussed by ADE. He believed that it might be possible to take the law and the caveats to those descriptions that have been discussed by the Task Force and integrate this combined information into a rubric. Mr. Stollar could bring a version of this rubric to the Task Force for its approval. He stated that he was aware that some districts have different definitions than the Task Force for common things like ELD. Definitions of these items need to be woven into the criteria to make them clear.

#### **5. Presentation and Discussion of Training Program for School District Personnel on Structured English Immersion Models**

Ms. Adela Santa Cruz the Director of Program Effectiveness in the Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS), provided an update to the Task Force on the status of the training program. Ms. Santa Cruz stated that ADE is continuing its Round Two training through the end of July, and will offer more training sessions in August and September for new and returning teachers. Through its partnerships with inter-government agencies, ADE and its partners have now trained a total of 4900 teachers with another 2000 teachers to be trained before the end of summer. So far just this summer through ADE and its partners, the Department has trained 2300 teachers. ADE is planning its next two-day training session to begin at the end of October. The last two-day training session is scheduled for early spring. This spring session will complete the 45 hours of ELD and Discrete Skills Inventory (DSI) training for ELL teachers.

Dr. Garcia asked if the numbers trained included those trained by trainers who have gone out and trained others. Ms. Santa Cruz agreed. Dr. Garcia verified that districts who have had teachers trained are training their own or other teachers. He asked who bore the costs of those training sessions. Ms. Santa Cruz stated that all materials are supplied for free by ADE, but if there were salaries or wages for teachers training others, these costs would be borne by the districts. Dr. Garcia asked if all the teachers requiring training will receive training. Ms. Santa Cruz stated that all requests had been filled, and all ELL teachers needing training will have been trained in the first 20 hours. This is statewide.

Dr. Garcia expressed a concern that the implementation of the models will only be as effective as the training which instructors and key personnel have received. He asked for assurance from ADE that this training has been completed and that teachers are ready to teach ELD in the approved models in the fall. Ms. Santa Cruz stated that the training has been sufficient to allow full implementation.

## **6. Presentation and Discussion of Arizona Department of Education Monitoring of School Districts and Charter Schools pursuant to A.R.S. §15.756.01 (G) and §15.756.08**

Mr. Stollar presented ADE's plan to monitor school districts and charter schools. He stated that ADE has been active in monitoring the training sessions to ensure that they are adhering to the construct that had been originally developed. A discussion had come up at the OELAS conference in Tucson last year about how the training would reach the estimated 6500 teachers needing training. Mr. Stollar noted that ADE is estimating that by summer's end, more than 6000 teachers will have received the two-day training. He stated that he is confident that all teachers needing the training will receive it. The next slated twenty-five hours of training is going to be more interactive including discussions with teachers on how the models are working in the field.

Mr. Stollar said that the next important task for OELAS will be monitoring school districts on the use of approved ELL program models. OELAS is planning on using a similar process as they have for Title III. They are going to begin with a desk audit process to gather data about designated districts so that evaluators can familiarize themselves with their assigned districts prior to on-site visits. The comprehensive monitoring process will include interviews, on-site visits, discussions with staff and students, in-class visits, and a comparison between the written model and actual practices. They will take particular note on best practices. ADE will monitor one hundred school districts this year. The department is examining a variety of districts because it will also have other monitoring duties to perform, including Title III, Local Education Agencies (LEA) improvement, districts that were in a corrective action from the prior year, and districts with both high and low percentages of ELLs as required in Arizona statute.

Mr. Stollar stated that the Department of Education has integrated its monitoring process into an electronic system where data can be captured instantaneously with a full database that includes

extensive details, such as frequency counts and interrelationships. By the August or September Task Force meeting, he stated that he would have a better description of the monitoring process. Mr. Jim DiCello asked how long does the on-site monitoring process take at a typical school. Mr. Stollar stated that a team of three to five people go on a district site visit. The length of time at each district depends on how many monitoring requirement categories the district has including corrective actions. For a large district, the process might take a week, and for a small district, perhaps only a day or two.

Mr. DiCello asked what the consequences would be if a district was not in compliance. Mr. Stollar stated that House Bill 2064 does not have any specific sanctions against school districts which do not comply. ADE would be in communication with the district to encourage compliance, and if forced to, could present on the issue to the State Board of Education. Ms. Dugan commented that it might be possible to pull funding in extreme cases, possibly including federal funding. This would most likely be a rare scenario.

Dr. Garcia stated that the Task Force is charged to create an effective ELL model. He suggested that ADE use a sampling of districts to evaluate the effectiveness of the different kinds of models. He expressed hope that ADE considers using this sampling approach when it selects the school districts to be monitored. Mr. Stollar stated that H.B. 2064 specified that a certain number of high and low ELL populated districts must be monitored. He agreed that ADE wants a broad perspective of districts including urban, rural, big and small, to obtain an accurate picture.

## **7. Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Task Force Activities**

Mr. Maguire had nothing to comment about future activities but announced that the Legislature did appropriate the funding for forty million dollars for the ELL program as well as the ten million dollars for compensatory instruction for ELLs. In light of recent budget constraints and shortfalls, this is significant. Mr. Maguire stated that various state legislators have commended the Task Force members for their hard work and dedication. Mr. Maguire thanked the Task Force members and stated that without their work and diligence, he did not think this funding would have occurred.

## **8. Call to the Public**

A call to the public was made at 3:25pm. There were no public speakers.

## **9. Discussion of future meeting dates**

The next ELL Task Force meeting will be on August 14.

## **10. Adjournment**



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Mr. DiCello moved for the meeting to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Garcia Dugan. The meeting adjourned at 3:26pm.

**Arizona ELL Task Force**

Alan Maguire, Chairman